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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Navy

Notice of Availability of the Department of Navy Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Container System for the Management of Naval Spent Nuclear Fuel

SUMMARY: The Department of the Navy (Navy) is giving notice of the availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a Container System for the Management of Naval Spent Nuclear Fuel.

The Final EIS was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA); Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508; and Chief of Naval Operations Environmental and Natural Resources Program Manual, OPNAV Instruction 5090.1B. The Final EIS addresses the need, alternatives, and environmental impacts of manufacturing containers; loading containers, and handling and storage of naval spent nuclear fuel at the Department of Energy's Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL); transportation of naval spent nuclear fuel loaded containers to a notional repository or a centralized interim storage site; and the storage, handling, and transportation of certain radioactive waste associated with naval spent nuclear fuel management. The Department of Energy is participating as a cooperating agency and adopted this Final EIS (DOE/EIS-0251) on October 9, 1996.

Upon completion of general distribution of the document, DOE

will file the Final EIS with the Environmental Protection Agency, which will then publish this Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register**. The Final EIS will also be available to the public in DOE reading rooms and designated information locations which are identified in the **AVAILABILITY OF COPIES** section of this notice. The Navy plans to issue a Record of Decision on the Final EIS by December 31, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the Final EIS and for further information on the Final EIS should be directed to: Mr. William Knoll of the Naval Propulsion Program of the Department of the Navy, Code NAVSEA 08U, 2531 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22242-5160, Telephone: 703-602-8229. Copies of the Final EIS may be obtained by following instructions given below in the **AVAILABILITY OF COPIES** section.

BACKGROUND: The Navy issued a Draft EIS for public comment and published a Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register** on May 14, 1996 (61 CFR 24293). Thereafter, the Navy held six public hearings in three locations in the States of Idaho and Utah, in order to obtain public comments on the Draft EIS. The comment period was originally scheduled for 45 days, but a 15-day extension was granted based on a request from the State of Nevada. Public comments were received by mail, telephone, and facsimile. Comments on the DEIS were received from a broad spectrum of private citizens, local, state, and federal officials. Native American Tribes and public interest groups also provided comments. Comments are reprinted in the Final EIS

in Chapter 11, which is new in its entirety. The response to each comment is provided following the text of the comment.

Public comments on the Draft EIS were assessed and considered both individually and collectively by the Navy and DOE. Some comments resulted in modifications to the EIS. Changes to the EIS are annotated by sidebars in the margins. For other comments, the Navy explained why a change to the EIS was not warranted. Most responses to such comments communicated government policy, indicated that the comment was beyond the scope of the EIS, explained the relationship of this EIS to other related NEPA documents, referred commenters to information in the EIS, answered technical questions, or further explained technical issues.

The Final EIS, like the Draft EIS, addresses the potential environmental impacts associated with the need and alternatives for selecting a container system for the management of naval spent nuclear fuel on a national level. The Final EIS also addresses potential environmental impacts related to manufacturing containers; loading containers, handling and storage of naval spent nuclear fuel at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL); transportation of naval spent nuclear fuel to a notional repository or centralized interim storage site; and the storage, handling, and transportation of low-level radioactive waste, referred to as special case waste, associated with naval spent nuclear fuel management.

The six container system alternatives considered are:

1) No-Action Alterative - Use of existing technology to handle, store, and subsequently transport naval spent nuclear fuel to a geologic repository or a centralized interim storage site using the Navy M-140 transportation cask. Prior to shipment to a repository or centralized interim storage site, naval spent nuclear fuel would be managed at INEL in water pools or dry containers, then loaded into M-140 transportation casks. At the repository, the naval spent fuel would be unloaded from the M-140 transportation casks and placed in a geologic repository's surface facilities for loading into disposal containers. Following unloading, the M-140 transportation casks would be returned to INEL for reuse.

2) Multi-Purpose Canister Alternative - Use of large multi-purpose canisters for storage, transportation, and disposal of naval spent nuclear fuel, without repackaging or further handling of individual spent nuclear fuel assemblies. In addition to the sealed metal canisters, specialized casks or overpacks would be required for different stages of the process, such as on-site transfer, dry storage, transportation to a geologic repository or a centralized interim storage site, and disposal.

3) Current Technology/Supplemented by High Capacity Rail Alternative - Use of existing M-140 transportation casks, but with redesigned internal structures to accommodate a larger amount of naval spent nuclear fuel per cask, thus

reducing the total number of shipments required.

4) Transportable Storage Cask Alternative - Use of an existing, commercially available cask for storage at INEL and shipment of naval spent nuclear fuel to a geologic repository or centralized interim storage site. At a repository, the naval spent fuel would be unloaded from the casks and placed in a geologic repository's surface facilities for loading into disposal containers. The unloaded transportable storage casks could be returned to INEL for further storage and transport.

5) Dual-Purpose Canister Alternative - Use of an existing, commercially available canister and overpack system for storage at INEL and shipment of naval spent nuclear fuel to a geologic repository or centralized interim storage site. At a repository, the naval spent fuel would be unloaded from the canisters and placed in a geologic repository's surface facilities for loading into disposal containers.

6) Small Multi-Purpose Canister Alternative - Use of smaller multi-purpose canisters, rather than large multi-purpose canisters. The small multi-purpose canisters would be similar in design, operations, and function to the large multi-purpose canisters, but would offer a lower weight and size alternative for transportation and handling at a geologic repository or centralized interim storage site.

In addition, the environmental evaluations in this Final EIS include several actions which are related to the container system

choice: manufacturing the container system; handling and transportation associated with the container system; modifications at INEL to support loading naval spent nuclear fuel into containers for dry storage; the location of the dry storage at INEL; and the storage, handling, and transportation of special case waste associated with naval spent nuclear fuel.
The Draft EIS did not contain a preferred alternative and concluded that the environmental impacts were small and comparable among all alternatives. The identification of a preferred alternative in the Final EIS takes into consideration the following factors: (1) public comments; (2) protection of human health and the environment; (3) cost; (4) technical feasibility; (5) operational efficiency; (6) regulatory impacts; and (7) storage or disposal criteria which may be established for a notional repository or centralized interim storage site outside the State of Idaho.

The Navy's preferred alternative for a container system for the management of naval spent nuclear fuel is the Dual-Purpose Canister Alternative. A system allowing the naval spent fuel assemblies to be loaded into a canister with a welded closure, which can be placed into separate shielded storage overpacks and transportation overpacks, would allow the Navy to take advantage of savings in costs, occupational exposure, handling, complexity, and environmental impacts associated with handling and waste generation in comparison to cask-based designs which require additional handling of individual fuel assemblies.

While a multi-purpose canister system has the potential to produce even greater savings in these areas, the disposal container design and waste acceptance requirements for a geologic repository have not yet been established. When these standards are established, they could result in a need to open canisters originally intended for disposal for purposes such as inspection or changes in the contents. The future requirements might even require the individual fuel assemblies to be transferred to some different container for disposal. This means that multi-purpose canister systems do not provide any definite functional advantages over the dual-purpose canister system at this time. On the other hand, it is possible that the canisters for dual-purpose canister systems may prove suitable for disposal in a geologic repository once the standards are determined.

DATES: A 45 day comment period following issue of the Draft EIS would have ended on July 3, 1996; however, the comment period was extended to July 18, 1996 based on a request from the State of Nevada. The Record of Decision is expected to be issued by December 31, 1996.

AVAILABILITY OF COPIES OF THE FINAL EIS: Copies of the Final EIS are being distributed to Federal, State, and local officials and agencies; and to organizations and individuals known to be interested in the EIS. Additional copies may be obtained by contacting Mr. Knoll at the above address (see **ADDRESSES**). Copies of the Final EIS will be available for public review at the locations listed below. Copies of selected reference

materials and public hearing transcripts are available in Reading Rooms and Other Information Locations listed below. Copies of the reference material may also be obtained upon request.

The Final EIS is about 700 pages in length. Separately bound copies of the 19-page Executive Summary are available for review for those who do not wish to have the entire Final EIS. When requesting copies of the Final EIS, please indicate whether you wish to receive only the Executive Summary, or the entire Final EIS.

Location of Reading Rooms:

- Public Reading Room for U. S. DOE Headquarters; 1000 Independence Avenue, SW; 1E-190 Forrestal Building; Washington, DC
- Public Reading Room for U. S. DOE - Idaho Operations Office; 1776 Science Center Drive; Idaho Falls, ID
- Public Reading Room for U. S. DOE - Nevada Operations Office; 3004 South Highland Drive; Las Vegas, NV
- Flagstaff Public Library; 300 West Aspen Street; Flagstaff, AZ
- Sacramento Library; Central Office; 828 I Street; Sacramento
- Denver Public Library; 1357 Broadway; Denver, CO
- Boise Public Library; 715 South Capital Boulevard; Boise, ID
- Shoshone-Bannock Library; Bannock and Pima Streets; HRDC Building; Ft. Hall, ID
- Idaho Falls Public Library; 457 Broadway; Idaho Falls, ID
- Pocatello Public Library; 912 East Clark Street; Pocatello, ID
- Albuquerque Bernalillo County Library; 501 Copper NW;

Albuquerque, NM

- Deschutes County Library; 507 NW Wall Street; Bend, OR
- Salt Lake City Public Library; 209 East 500 South; Salt Lake City, UT
- Laramie County Library; 2800 Central Avenue; Cheyenne, WY

Other Information Locations:

- Lost River Community Library; 126 South Front Street, Box 170; Arco, ID
- Idaho State Library; 325 West State Street; Boise, ID
- City of Burley, Public Library; 1300 Miller Avenue; Burley, ID
- Coeur d'Alene Public Library; 201 Harrison Avenue; Coeur d'Alene, ID
- City of Emmett, Public Library; 275 South Hayes; Emmett, ID
- City of Gooding Public Library; 306 5th Avenue West; Gooding, ID
- Consolidated Free Library; 8385 North Government Way; Hayden Branch; Hayden Lake, ID
- City of Homedale, Public Library; 125 West Owyhee; Homedale, ID
- Ketchum Public Library; 415 Spruce Avenue North; Ketchum, ID
- Las Vegas Public Library; 833 Las Vegas Boulevard North; Las Vegas, NV
- Moscow Public Library; 100 South Jefferson; Moscow, ID
- University of Idaho Library; Rayburn Street Moscow, ID
- Ola District Library; 11475 Ola School Road; Ola ID
- Clearwater Memorial Library; 402 Michigan Avenue; Orofino, ID
- Idaho State University Library, Documents Department; 741 South

7th Avenue; Pocatello, ID

- Salmon Public Library; 204 Main Street; Salmon, ID

- Shoshone Public Library; 211 South Rail Street; Shoshone, ID

- Twin Falls Public Library; 434 Second Street East; Twin Falls, ID

- Caliente Public Library, 120 Depot Avenue; Caliente, NV

- Carson City Public Library; 900 North Roop Street; Carson City, NV

- Elko Public Library; 720 Court Street; Elko, NV

- Lincoln County Public Library; Alamo Branch; First West Street; Alamo, NV

- Lincoln County Public Library; Pioche (Main Branch); Number 1 Main Street; Pioche, NV

- Pahrump Public Library; 2101 East Calvado Boulevard; Pahrump, NV

- Smokey Valley Library District; Hadley Circle; Round Mountain, NV

- Tonopah Public Library; 171 Central; Tonopah, NV

- Brigham City Library; 20 North Main Street; Brigham City, UT

- Cedar City Library; 136 West Center; Cedar City, UT

- Delta City Library; 76 North 200 West; Delta, UT

- Logan City Library; 255 North Main; Logan, UT

- Marriott Library; University of Utah; Salt Lake City, UT

18 Nov 1996
Date

F. L. Bowman
Admiral, USN,
Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.